

# Increasing Vaccine Confidence Through Communication and Community Engagement

Now that we have safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in the United States and a vaccine supply that will continue to increase, we must ensure those vaccines are accessible to all communities, and that the people in these communities have high confidence in the vaccines being offered. Building vaccine confidence requires trust in three areas: (1) the vaccines themselves, (2) the healthcare personnel providing vaccines, and (3) the system approving, distributing, and monitoring vaccines.

Trust cannot be built overnight. Building vaccine confidence in communities that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and other health inequities will require additional effort. Building vaccine confidence requires commitment and cooperation among CDC, health departments, other government agencies, elected officials, community leaders, and countless partners. Trust is built when these groups engage communities, deliver on promises made, and speak to the values of the communities.

## Tips to Increase Vaccine Confidence

- 1. Acknowledge the role of long-standing systemic health and social inequities.** Recognize the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. Understand that the experiences of individuals and communities with healthcare systems and COVID-19 impact their perceptions and willingness to trust the vaccines.
- 2. Make vaccine confidence visible to help build social norms.** Engage in efforts to make vaccination the norm—not the exception. Encourage healthcare personnel, community leaders, and individuals to get vaccinated when vaccines are available to them. Encourage them to share their reasons for getting vaccinated with family, friends, and communities. Consider publicly celebrating those who got vaccinated and encourage them to wear stickers or buttons saying they got vaccinated. These can be powerful opportunities to promote vaccination and increase motivation.

- 3. Use trusted messengers to share clear, credible communication.** Identify people, organizations, and communication channels that are trusted by the community and use partnerships to amplify accurate messages. Where possible, test messages with your audiences before disseminating them widely and continually update messages to ensure they remain relevant.
- 4. Develop frequent community engagement activities.** Foster an environment where people can expect honest dialogue with their local government and health system and regular updates on the latest vaccine information. Two-way feedback loops, like virtual town halls or question-and-answer sessions, allow people to ask questions, feel heard, and get their concerns addressed. This will support and increase their vaccine confidence.
- 5. Engage people across multiple channels.** Conduct [safe, face-to-face outreach](#) to people who may not be on digital platforms, including older adults and [people experiencing homelessness](#). Continue to engage with communities digitally via professional networking websites, neighborhood-focused social media groups, etc.
- 6. Build new partnerships.** Partner with organizations that may not have traditionally engaged in vaccination programs to promote vaccine confidence and increase vaccine demand. These organizations, including civic and social organizations, schools and universities, faith-based organizations, youth and sports clubs, businesses and unions, and libraries and museums, can extend the reach of vaccine messages to increase confidence.



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**7. Think about other community spaces.** Ask schools, faith-based organizations, grocery stores, *bodegas*, drugstores, or even convenience stores to hang up posters and spread the word about vaccinations and offer their facilities as vaccination sites.

**8. Reach out to media outlets that serve specific communities.** Culturally responsive outlets can help increase awareness and share information about vaccines. For example, a newspaper for a religious community or a community radio station that serves Spanish-language or another non-English-speaking population could share messages and content about vaccines and offer opportunities for audiences to ask questions.

**9. Consider how vaccine access and demand issues intersect.** Work with partners to identify and remove barriers to vaccine uptake in specific communities.

- » Partner with rideshare services to offer free rides to vaccination appointments for people who live in a ZIP code with limited public transportation and low car ownership.
- » Collaborate with Meals on Wheels and other organizations that provide services to people who are homebound to assist clients with making vaccination appointments.
- » Partner with a local restaurant association to put vaccine information flyers in all takeout delivery orders.

## Additional Resources and References

CDC | [Vaccinate with Confidence](#)

CDC | [Vaccine communication toolkits for community-based organizations](#)

Infectious Diseases Society of America | [COVID-19 Real Time Learning Network | Communications and community engagement for multicultural patient populations](#)

National Collaborative for Health Equity | [COVID-19 Response and Updates](#)

